

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 12591 211516Z

70

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 DRC-01 /064 W

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R 211432Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1562

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 12591

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PINS PINT ET FR

SUBJECT: AFAR SULTAN AND RAS MENGESHA

REFS: (A) ADDIS 11449; (B) ADDIS 11366

1. USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTS SULTAN OF AFAR, ALI MIRA HANFERE, HAS FLED AFAR CAPITAL, ASSAITA, WITH ELEMENTS ETHIOPIAN ARMY IN PURSUIT. SULTAN, WITH SEVERAL THOUSAND WELL-ARMED SUPPORTERS, SAID TO BE HEADING FOR AREA NEAR FRENCH TERRITORY OF AFARS AND ISSAS (TFAI) BORDER. DISTINCT POSSIBILITY EXISTS SULTAN MAY ATTEMPT TO CROSS INTO TFAI IF MILITARY PRESS PURSUIT. REPORTEDLY, FRENCH TFAI HICOM DABLANC WILL ARRIVE ADDIS EVENING OCTOBER 21 TO DISCUSS MUTUAL PROBLEM OF SULTAN WITH EPMG.

2. BRITISH COLLEAGUE HAS JUST TRAVELED THROUGH AREA AND REPORTS THAT, AT LEAST LAST WEEK, SULTAN WAS PEACEFULLY SITTING IN ASSAITA, FRENCH EMBOFF ADMITS DABLANC SCHEDULED PAY VISIT TO
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 12591 211516Z

ADDIS SOON BUT STATES TRIP IS HICOM'S INITIAL COURTESY CALL

(HE ASSUMED POSITION ONLY LAST MONTH) AND NOT CONNECTED WITH ALI MIRA. OTHER TRAVELERS TELL US THAT SEEN FROM ROAD MORE AFAR THAN USUAL APPEAR TO BE CARRYING MODERN RIFLES AND FULL BANDOLIERS.

3. GROUND FORCE COMMANDER MG GIZAW CONFIRMED TO CHMAAG OCTOBER 19 THAT MILITARY OPERATIONS INTENDED LEAD TO CAPTURE RAS MENGESHA SEYOUM, OF TIGRE, IN COURSE.

4. COMMENT: IF EPMG HAS IN FACT DECIDED TO PURSUE SULTAN, IT COULD FACE FURTHER DIFFICULTIES IN AFAR LAND. OUR AFAR SOURCES, ADMITTEDLY CLOSE TO SULTAN, CLAIM AFAR WILL ADAMANTLY OPPOSE MOVE AGAINST ALI MIRA. WHILE AFAR OBVIOUSLY MILITARILY INFERIOR TO EPMG REGULARS, ESTIMATED 500,000 AFAR TRIBESMEN COULD POST SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEM IN THEIR AREA AND COULD, PRESUMABLY, CUT HIGHLAND ACCESS TO RED SEA PORTS, AT LEAST INTERMITTENTLY. MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST RAS MENGESHA COULD COMPLICATE PROBLEM FURTHER.
SEBASTIAN

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